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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effects of having a classroom book collection on the reading comprehension, reading attitudes, and reading habits (quantity and type of books read) of 54 students of English as a second language in two middle school classes in southern California, grades 5 and 6. Approximately half of each class had access to a collection of trade books within the classroom; the other half relied on books from the school library, to which regular class trips were made. Students recorded their voluntary reading in folders in the classroom, and voluntary reading groups were stratified and changes measured based on this record. Students were administered a reading attitudes survey, and a guided written story retelling as a measure of reading comprehension. The classroom trade book intervention took place over 12 weeks, and attitude and comprehension measures were re-administered. Although the cooperating teacher did not follow through on a number of elements in the experiment, including proper recording of voluntary reading and modeling of reading for pleasure, five students in the intervention group persisted in recording their reading habits. All read in series; one read 78 books. The intervention group had significantly higher comprehension scores, although all scores remained low. Contains 31 reference. (MSE)

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The Effects of a Classroom Trade Book Collection on Middle School ESL 5/6 Students

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Bilingual students have unique problems that make the study of literacy acquisition complex. Bilingual students are often identified as an at-risk population. Hispanics, in particular, have a 40% high school dropout rate, a 35% grade retention rate, and a two-to-four grade level achievement gap (Fitzgerald, 1995). The disparity between Hispanics and Whites at 8 years old is negligible (students below grade level: Whites 24.5%, Hispanics 25.0%), by age 13 the gap has widened considerably (students below grade level: Whites 28.8%, Hispanics 40.3%) (Garcia, E., 1995, p. 375). Literacy skills important to English as a Second Language (ESL) students, particularly during early adolescence, include reading fluency, a widened knowledge base, comprehension of L2 and an extended vocabulary in L2 (Garcia, G., 1991).

Quantity of print exposure has demonstrated a significant predictor of word and vocabulary knowledge, general world knowledge, verbal skill, reading comprehension, interest in reading and persistence in reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; McBride-Chang, Manis, Seidenberg, Custodio, & Doi, 1993; West, Stanovich, & Mitchell, 1993). While independent reading has been infused into elementary whole language ESL programs, it is less evident in middle and secondary ESL programs (Rigg, 1991). Motivation to read *more* becomes crucial, particularly for middle school ESL 5/6 students who need to move from learning to read to reading fluency prior to high school.

Optimally, motivation is provided in the classroom environment that accommodates students' personal interests. Improved attitudes toward reading through personal interest offers potential for persistence in reading (Hidi & Anderson, 1992). Deci's self-determination theory is helpful in understanding application of motivational principles (Deci, 1992). According to self-determination theory, interest accommodates students' basic needs for competence, self determination and relatedness. This occurs when ". . .one encounters novel, challenging, or aesthetically pleasing activities or objects in a context that allows satisfaction of basic psychological needs. . ." (p. 49). Through satisfaction when taking part in an initially interesting experience, the student wants to interact in a similar way again. The endurance of interest is influenced by the activity's availability in the subject's *immediate* environment. McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth (1995) theorize that attitudes are associated with one beliefs related to outcomes. If student interest is captivated by reading and has a good outcome, then a positive attitude toward reading is enhanced.

Positive attitudes towards reading, however, have nationally demonstrated a downward trend leading up to middle school. In the McKenna and associates' (1995) survey, student attitudes towards reading become more negative gradually, but steadily, throughout the elementary school years (grades 1-6). The trend toward more negative recreational attitudes was clearly related to ability and was steepest for least able readers. This is consistent with motivational research that has previously shown a decline in intrinsic motivation for learning throughout the grade school years (Harter, 1981).

Extrinsic motivation is often needed for engagement in activities that are not in themselves perceived as interesting, but are instrumental for some desired outcome (in this case reading). Extrinsic motivation can develop sequentially in such a way that the external motivation becomes internalized, resulting in eventual internal motivation. The social context that enhances personal motivational structures gives competence-promoting feedback (Anderman & Maehr, 1994). The desired activity must be in a context in which the student has a sense of personal causation with respect to competence. Student choice is important for a student's sense of independence or autonomy and the context must also include interpersonal involvement that satisfies a person's need for relatedness. Thus, to facilitate optimal conditions for motivation, one must take into account the student's dispositions, provide an appropriately matched stimuli, give the student choice and relate to the student in a positive manner (Deci, 1991, p. 56-61).

Precedent has been set in intrinsically motivated literature-based interventions with ethnically diverse elementary subjects (Morrow, 1992; Morrow, Sharkey & Firestone,

1992; Richek & McTague, 1988; Sheveland, 1994). Literature collections demonstrated effect in improved attitudes toward reading and self-directed reading patterns. Choice and autonomy were affirmed as most popular rewards for mid-grade elementary students (Wiesendanger & Bader, 1989). An experimental study with ESL middle schoolers, however, has not been conducted.

The purpose of this study was to study the effects of a classroom trade book collection attending to interest qualities (e.g., novelty, high interest developmental issues, wide variety of reading levels, cultural congruence, attention-getting covers arranged in interest categories and multiple books in the same genre or by the same author) with ESL 5/6 middle school students. A classroom setting was chosen in which the teacher modeled and gave social support to voluntary reading through the use of literature in the curriculum, regular trips to the library and time in class to check out books and read silently in support the intervention. The effects studied included reading comprehension, reading attitude and quantity of books read as well as analysis of the type of books preferred by the subjects.

Methods

Subjects

Subjects were 54 English as a Second Language (ESL) 5/6 students attending an urban middle school in southern California. The subjects were Mexican-American with the exception of one Brazilian-American. The school enrollment was composed of 842 students with the following ethnic distribution: 53 percent Mexican-American, 3.9 African-American, 1.1 Filipino and 39.8 White. The area surrounding the school was an economically and socially diverse beach community, resulting in a U-shaped curve in which Mexican-American were primarily in the lower achieving population and higher SES students in the upper levels of achievement with few students in the middle. Students participating in the Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP) were 298, primarily Mexican-American. The site was generally at or slightly below district average in reading and written expression. A survey conducted the year prior to the study showed that 55% of the students used the school library only once a month or never, 75% used the public library either once a month or never. Thirty six percent of the students said they did not enjoy reading although 86% said they thought reading was important.

Two ESL 5/6 classes taught by the same teacher were chosen for a literature intervention. ESL 5/6 students are at approximately a third grade English-reading proficiency level. At this stage they need to transition from learning to read in L2 to reading fluency in L2. Quantity of reading is essential for fluency development.

The teacher was interviewed prior to school starting. In addition to teaching the two ESL 5/6 classes, she was chosen because she said she taught the class from a whole language perspective. Whole language strategies she claimed to use included: (1) real literature for reading instruction, (2) regular trips to the school library to encourage reading, (3) reading and writing connections, (4) time in class to check out books, and (5) silent reading time. She referred to Nancie Atwell as the model for how she conducted her class. She also said she read for her own pleasure.

Subject Assignment for Intervention. Random assignment for a trade book intervention was stratified according to the amount of reading students recorded for eight weeks prior to the intervention. Gender was the secondary consideration. Twenty eight students were selected for the intervention (15 males and 13 females). Twenty five composed the control group (14 males and 11 females). Approximately half of each of the two classes had access to the classroom collection of books, while the other half relied on books from the school library. Following the 12 weeks of intervention, the classroom collection of books was donated and available for all students.

Subject Assignment for Voluntary Reading Groups. Voluntary Reading Groups (VRG) were determined from records of student reading kept during the eight weeks prior to the second semester of school. Students wrote down their voluntary reading on folders

(NCTE, 1956) provided in the classroom. Instruction relating to minimal records were explained by the teacher. Records of voluntary reading were to continue for the twelve weeks of the trade book intervention. Records for eight weeks at the end of the twelve week trade book intervention provided the means by which the quantity of books read voluntarily could be assessed.

Procedure

The primary research question addressed by this study was: Does a classroom trade book collection attending to interest qualities have an effect on reading comprehension, reading attitude or quantity of books read? To answer this question, the study was conducted over 22 school weeks. During the first eight weeks, records of voluntary reading were kept for the purpose of defining voluntary reading categories according to the quantity of books read prior to the intervention. These records were also used for the purpose of stratifying random selection for those in the control and treatment groups. During week eight the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was administered as a measure of reading attitude prior to the intervention. The first week of the intervention, week nine, a guided written retelling was administered as a measure of reading comprehension (Morrow, 1988). Gary Soto's story, *Broken Chain* from Baseball in April (1990) was used for this purpose. A classroom trade book intervention was administered weeks eight through twenty (12 weeks). The week following the intervention written guided retellings (Morrow, 1988) were administered once again, using Gary Soto's short story *Seventh Grade* from Baseball in April (1990). The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was readministered week 22. The records for voluntary reading during the last 8 weeks of the intervention were collected for the purpose of assessing the effect of the trade book collection on quantity of books read voluntarily.

The secondary issue addressed by this study was to analyze the type of books preferred by middle school ESL students. Records of books read would be analyzed for patterns that emerged. In a previous study with third grade students, students read more and advanced to more complex books as a result of reading in series (i.e., multiple books by the same author or in the same genre) (Sheveland, 1994).

To assess teacher support through classroom procedures including literature used for reading curriculum, time for silent reading and checking out of books and trips to the library, the researcher visited the classroom approximately once every two weeks to straighten books and observe the class as well as talk with the teacher. Information was further corraborated with the bilingual chair at the school site. The researcher also used pre-service student teachers who were placed in the classroom as sources of classroom information.

Pre/post Tests and Voluntary Reading Group Designations. Voluntary reading choices were recorded during the first eight weeks of the study. From students' records, the quantitative cut-off was determined from emerging reading patterns. Voluntary Reading Groups (VRG) were defined as: VRG One=no books read in eight weeks, VRG Two=one book read in eight weeks, and VRG Three=2 or more books read in eight weeks. Membership to VRG was to be reassessed the last 8 weeks of the trade book intervention.

During the two weeks prior to the intervention the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (RA) (McKenna & Kear, 1990) was administered then readministered two weeks after the intervention. The guided written retelling measure of reading comprehension (RC) was administered during the first week of the trade book intervention and again following the trade book intervention.

The record of books read voluntarily, the reading attitude instrument and the guided retelling were administered for the purpose of assessing the effect of the trade book collection intervention. For this purpose the data were submitted to Repeated Measure Analysis of Variance for analysis.

Intervention. The 12-week intervention involved introducing a trade book collection, primarily paperback (Campbell, Griswold, & Smith, 1988) arranged in interest

categories (i.e., scary, adventure, romance, mystery, funny, fantasy, animals, etc.) into two ESL 5/6 classes that met in the same classroom different periods of the day. The intervention half of each class was allowed access to the books. The control group, half of each class, was not allowed access to the books. Both groups had access to the school library.

The intervention trade book collection was composed of fiction, historical narrative, joke and cartoon books with the following interest qualities: (1) Content and book cover communicate novelty, challenge, surprisingness, complexity and incongruity (Deci, 1992; Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1981; Iran-Nejad, 1987), (2) Content and book cover have adequate suspense, goal importance and goal attainment difficulty to hold students' interest (Jose, 1988; Jose & Brewer, 1990); (3) Balanced gender of main character (Bleakley, Westerberg & Hopkins, 1988); (4) Accommodation of a wide variety of dispositional preferences (Deci, 1992); (5) Selections from students' primary culture as well as knowledge of other cultures; (6) Trade books in both Spanish and English; (7) Books that communicate a sense of play with language (i.e., poetry, jokes, cartoons, etc.) (Nell, 1988); (8) Multiple books by the same author or in the same genre (Sheveland, 1994). Each of the interest categories were placed on a shelf identified with an interest label. Each interest category was further identified by different colored dots on the spine of the book. The books were arranged according to ease of reading--short books (starting at a reading level of approximately second grade) to longer books (up to high school reading levels). The collection was in a student/book ratio of approximately 1:20.

Intervention and control groups were identified during the twelve weeks by a star on their book record folders. The teacher was also given a record of group membership. Students in the control group were assured that the books would be available to them following the twelve weeks. Check out procedures for the classroom collection was a simple sign out card inserted in each book then reinserted when the book was returned. A card box with category dividers that matched the interest categories was left by the collection. The researcher periodically came to keep the collection in the designed order. Meanwhile *all* students were encouraged to check out books from the school library.

Instruments

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990). A four-category cartoon character (Garfield) Likert response format was created with 20 items; 10 relating to recreational reading, 10 to academic reading. The survey resulted from adjustments made from a prototype administered to 199 elementary students. The revised instrument was administered to a national sample of over 18,000 students in grades one through six. Cronbach alphas ranged from .74 to .89. Since reading levels of students were at the third or fourth grade reading level, this instrument with pictorial aids to response was thought appropriate.

Story Retellings. Pre and post guided-written retellings of two stories were used as measures of reading comprehension. Several studies have demonstrated the lack of sensitivity of standardized tests to literature interventions. Literature interventions do not negatively effect standardized scores, however (Morrow, 1992, Sadoski, 1985). A *guided*-retelling was used because free recall measures typically underestimate memory for details and higher-level information units (Desrochers, 1988, p. 162).

The retelling assessment rubric takes into account specific recall (i.e., the story grammar including setting, theme, plot episodes, resolution and sequence). Stories were chosen for the retelling on the basis of cultural congruence (Gary Soto writes about first language Spanish-speakers living in the United States), characters the same age as the readers, settings similar to the students (school and home setting in California), themes congruent with middle schoolers (romance and identity), and a definite resolution.

The two stories were also chosen for their close alignment in relationship to: (1) level of readability index (4.45/4.56), (2) short stories by the same author, (3) occasional use of Spanish words, (5) clear setting/problem/resolution story grammars.

The retellings were administered according to the instructions given by Morrow (1988). She administered retellings in a similar manner under a variety of settings with children from diverse backgrounds. Reliability and validity for this type of instrument were based on those studies (Morrow, 1985; Morrow, O'Connor, & Smith, 1990; Morrow, 1992). Retelling and rewriting reliability was in the range of .90 (Morrow, 1992). In addition, eight coders for five subjects in her 1992 study yielded agreements of 95% for story retelling and 96% for story rewriting. Additionally, results from a Probed Recall comprehension test yielded a 93% agreement among eight coders for five subjects (Morrow, 1992, p. 255-256).

In this study, instructions made accommodation for two elements of students' prior knowledge. First, they were consistent with a form of assessment encouraged by the state of California for that school year. The state developed a reading assessment termed the CLAS test (California Learning Assessment System). The form of the test included a format in which students were encouraged to take notes while reading. A column to the right of the text was titled *Notes and Responses*. In groups and in individual responses students, for the CLAS test, responded to a variety of response prompts. The students in this study had experience with samples given for the purpose of preparing them for the CLAS test. For that reason, a similar format was used. The Gary Soto stories were formatted with writing space to the right of each page headed with the CLAS terminology, *Notes and Responses*. Second, students were allowed to underline, make notes or write responses in the space provided to the right of the story in Spanish or English, although the retelling had to be in English. The story was handed in prior to the written retelling. The written retelling was done in the absence of the text immediately following reading.

Record of books read for voluntary reading (NCTE, 1954). A folder available through the National Council of Teacher of English was used as a simple way to register books read by students. For each book a space is provided for the title and author of the book with a small space to write a brief summary. The folder also has simple codes for the student to use to express how well the book was liked, what they liked and what they disliked. Since the site was using portfolios, the folder easily fit into the class system of record-keeping. In addition to being used for statistical analysis, the record of books read could provide insight into the books preferred by middle school ESL students.

Results

To examine whether the trade book intervention made a difference in reading comprehension and reading attitude, pre/post measures were submitted to repeated measures analysis of variance with an orthogonal polynomial transformation for univariate within subject effects (time) and contrast variables for between subject effect. Quantity of books read voluntarily was not submitted for analysis, since the cooperating teacher failed to hold students accountable for registering the books read (further explanation is given later in the results section). Means and standard deviations for each of the two measures are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Repeated measures analysis of variance showed a between subject effect for the intervention [$F(1,40)=5.39$, $p<.02$] in relationship to the written retelling measure of comprehension. There was a within subject main effect for time [$F(1,40=4.15$, $p<.04$]. The within subject time*treatment interaction did not show significance [$F(1,40)=2.36$, $p<.13$]. In short, there was a significant difference between the post-retelling scores of the intervention group and the control group. Results of a Tukey test indicated that students in Table1

Means and Standard Deviations for RC and RA

	Group							
	Literature Intervention				Control			
Var.	Pre-test	*(SD)*	Post-test	*(SD)*	Pre-test	*(SD)*	Post-test	*(SD)*
RC	5.4	2.79	*6.65	2.43	4.30	2.82	*4.47	2.18
RA	51.9	13.78	**54.5	12.19	52	9.71	**47	13.13

*p<.05, **p<.01

Note. RC=written guided retelling measure of reading comprehension, RA=Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990)

the literature intervention group did significantly better in the post-retelling. While all students improved over time, the intervention group made *more* improvement. A time*treatment did not demonstrate significance, however, since the intervention group had higher retelling scores than the control group on their pre-test retelling. The difference in the pre-test scores were not at a significant level, however.

For reading attitude, repeated measure analysis of variance did not show a between subject main effect for the intervention [F(1,37)=.98, p<.32]. No main effect for time was demonstrated [F(1,37)=.75, p<.39]. There was a significant time*treatment effect, however [F(1,37)=7.66, p<.009]. The mean attitude scores for students in the literature intervention group went up by 2.62 points while the control group mean went down by five points. Thus, means that were within .1 of each other at the beginning of the semester (control group=52, intervention group=51.9) had an end of the semester difference of 7.52 (control group=47, intervention=54.52).

It was disappointing to not have the record of books read. It became apparent over time that the cooperating teacher did not follow through with several strategies she said she employed. She said that she took the students to the library regularly when in fact the class went to the library two times during the entire school year. Although she used real literature for reading instruction, students never read the books independently. All reading was done outloud with the teacher providing a synopsis of the plot at regular intervals. Getting through a chapter book was a laboriously long process. Observations by the researcher and pre-service teachers found poor classroom management and students inattentive during classroom reading. Most students did not even follow along or have their books open. In fact, the pre-service student teachers asked to be moved due to frustration with the lack of effective classroom management.

While the teacher said she would incorporate the record of voluntary reading into the class, she did not include the record as any part of students' grade, did not allow classtime for check out of books and silent reading time was infrequent and/or poorly managed so that independent reading in class was not accomplished. When the researcher realized that records were not being kept approximately four weeks into the intervention, she talked with the teacher to discuss strategies for making sure the last eight weeks crucial to the study were consistent with the eight weeks prior to the intervention. The researcher left candy as an extrinsic motivational tool for students who registered their reading. The researcher also encouraged the record as an integral part of student portfolios. Pre-service teachers reported, however, that the candy was not given to students. It was also discovered that the record of books read remained outside of any accountability in relationship to student portfolios.

It must be noted that teachers on sites with a high bilingual population are often under additional stress due to requirements beyond those of a monolingual population. In this case, the master teacher was needed to teach math as well as the ESL 5/6 classes. She was not credentialed to teach math, but because of her Spanish-speaking ability she taught the classes on an emergency credential while going back to school nights to complete the courses needed for a credential in math. The need for bilingual math instruction was so great that her math class had more than 50 students. Students were rotated between her class and an aid-assisted computer lab. The system was demanding organizationally as well as pedogically. During the research time frame she was also planning her wedding. In addition, she volunteered to teach study strategies to students in her study hall which took away one of her potential preparation periods and added an additional preparation. I do not think she was intentionally negligent, she was simply overwhelmed with the amount of responsibilities required during that particular semester. Needless to say, she did not model personal reading for pleasure.

Under these circumstances in which social supports were not given, either for the encouragement or modeling of voluntary reading, five students continued recording their reading for a while and one student continued for the entire study. Two of the students were female and three were male. All were part of the intervention group. All had patterns of reading in series. The girls read romances (e.g., series by Francine Pascoul and Lurlene McDaniel and Judy Blume) as well as scary stories (e.g., Alvin Schwartz scary stories series, R.L. Stine and Christopher Pike). One of the boys started with sports books (Dean Hughes sports series), then switched to folktales (e.g., The Golden Fleece;, The Legend of King Arthur, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi and Ta-Na-E-Ka, an Indian folktale). Another boy read mysteries then 8 Heathcliff cartoon books and 3 Calvin and Hobbes, then tried sports and scary stories.

The most remarkable student continued to record his reading in spite of it being counterculture to the classroom. He recorded 78 books read. He read in series periodically, but his selections ranged from The Adventures of Tom Sawyer to multicultural Cinderella stories (e.g., Yeh-Shen, The Egyptian Cinderella, etc.). I made the post-hoc decision to interview him to find out why he read so much. I found that he came from a single parent home. His mother was on welfare and stayed at home to make sure that her children did the right things. Although they did not own books other than the Bible and catechism books, his mother made sure they checked books out of the public and school libraries. She also made sure he went to catechism and memorized what was assigned. She told her son that reading is what was going to make school easier and make a better life for him. He said he often got up early and read before the rest of the family got up. He read on the school bus going to school and going home. He liked study hall because he got to read books of his choice. He enjoyed having the books so readily available in the classroom, although he had used the school library prior to the intervention and continued to use both the school and classroom libraries. His favorite books were Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and Prince Caspian. He said he liked them because of the adventure and because they made him think. He said he could picture the other world as he read. He had asked teachers for recommendations of classics that would help him do better in high school. When Tom Sawyer and Chronicles of Narnia were recommended, he developed strategies to make them more accessible. For Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn he found a cartoon version of the stories in the school library and read them first so he would know how the stories went. For the Narnia tales, the classroom collection had the stories in both Spanish and English, so he read them first in Spanish then in English.

Although his reading attitude towards reading in his free time, books of his choice, and at home remained very high, the areas of reading attitude that went down during the intervention were primarily related to school reading including a diminished attitude towards reading class (ESL), the stories read in ESL, doing worksheets and teacher-asked questions about reading and school free-reading time. He said that his social studies and

drama teachers read for pleasure and made recommendations of reading. I asked him if other boys did not read as much as him because the books were too hard. He said that that was not the reason. They wanted to do other things, they thought reading was too boring. He, however, associated reading with his improved English and enjoyment. He liked books with adventure and kids that got into trouble. Although he read some of the R.L. Stine books in the collection, he thought they shouldn't be there, because they were too scary. When he took one home he hid it so his sister would not find it.

Discussion

In regards to the purpose of the study, it is difficult to interpret the reading comprehension findings. Although the intervention group's post scores were significantly better than the control group, all students' scores were low. The general rule of thumb for retelling is that comprehension below 70% means students are reading at the frustration level. The retelling means were out of a possible 10. The intervention group had a post test mean of 6.65. Generally, it can be inferred that the stories were too difficult for the students. Only 7 students out of 54 scored above 9 in the second retelling. It is also probable that the stories were too long for assessment purposes. Some students took good notes as they read, but appeared too tired to write in English the two pages it would take for a complete retelling (Jiménez, García & Pearson, 1996).

Interestingly, all but 8 in the first retelling and 2 in the second retelling said they enjoyed the story. Most students said they liked the stories because the characters were like them--it was like it could really happen. The students who didn't like the stories said the stories were boring, too long and lacked action. The general impression was that students enjoyed the stories, but found it difficult reading. They were too tired to do a complete job on a written retelling. Receptive understanding sometimes precedes expressive ability (Sheveland, 1994). From the popularity of Alvin Schwartz' scary stories, the one page stories might have been a better choice for assessment. Jimènez and associates (1996) have also found some appropriate text for assessment purposes.

The significantly improved attitudes towards reading were quite surprising in light of the lack of support in the classroom environment. The beginning attitude scores were comparable to scores of sixth graders in the national survey of the same instrument (McKenna et al, 1996). The improved scores for the intervention group and declining score for the control group are reasonable in light of motivational theory. Students did not have a choice of what they read for academic purposes. A single reading level was dictated for the whole class. From the retelling, there were a variety of reading levels represented in the class. Sixteen students received scores of 3 or lower. Four made no attempt at retelling, thus receiving zeros, while seven had scores of 9 or better. Texts appropriate for student reading levels may have been more interesting and useful for competence-building. Because the text chosen by the teacher was inaccessible to a good number of students, she felt it necessary to read outloud. Approximately four books were read over the entire year. As a result, students did not receive competence promoting feedback or have a sense of personal causation. *All* students were deprived of *quantity* of print. The read aloud sessions were whole class with a lot of verbal disciplinary interjections. Finally, this strategy was not conducive to relationship building either with the teacher or with fellow students.

In contrast, the classroom collection available to the intervention group gave choice, even choices that might be thought of as taboo for the classroom (e.g., R.L. Stine both Goosebumps and Fear Street series, Schwartz's Scary Stories, etc.). When I came to straighten the collection, books appeared always in motion, particularly the scary book section. In fact, R.L. Stine books had a way of disappearing. The choices appeared to capture student interest. Also, the collection had books at a reading level accessible to students. An effort was made to have age-appropriate picture-aided books such as Garfield, Calvin and Hobbs, Heathcliff and folktale collections (e.g., international

Cinderella tales and others). Alvin Schwartz' Scary Story series was always checked out. I bought multiple sets. The series is a collection of short one page urban tales with creepy black and white illustrations that include hands coming out of graves and other macabre scenes. Both boys and girls seemed fascinated. Competence feedback is immediate through quick success of a short tale. It is also rewarding to complete a book quickly and go on to another. An additional factor was peer recommendations. During several of my visits, students were not paying attention to the teacher but were at the back of the class by the collection sneaking books and showing them to each other. Other teachers on the site reported that books were passed around student to student. Thus students had competence building through the style and reading level of book and were part of relationships that supported their choices.

It is difficult to analyze students choices of books since consistent records were not kept. Of the 172 books recorded, 78 were recorded by one student. Scary, romance and relationship, humor, sport, mystery, fantasy, historical fiction, nonfiction biographical, information and animal books were all represented in student records. The shelves that appeared to have the most activity were the humorous (cartoon and joke books) and the scary stories. Students were not consistent with checking out the books, so records from the cards were not an accurate means of analyzing books read either. I did, however, find that the R.L. Stine books kept disappearing and were not always returned. Many students read lower reading level books such as the international collection of Cinderella books, Heathcliff stories, Alvin Schwartz' Scary Stories series and folktales. Students that recorded their reading did appear to read in patterns. For instance, one student read all fantasy and folktales (e.g., The Velveteen Rabbit, The Giving Tree, James and the Giant Peach, The Indian in the Cupboard, The Golden Fleece, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, and King Arthur). Another student read 5 Heathcliff stories, then 3 Calvin and Hobbes. In all but one case when 4 books or more were recorded, multiple books by the same author or in the same genre demonstrated reading in a series (10 students). A potential explanation from motivational theory is that students found a type of book interesting and wanted to interact in a similar way again (Deci, 1992).

Generally, it can be stated that the literature intervention did effect student attitudes towards reading. The lack of classroom support may have made the disparity between the two groups even greater. The fact that attitude scores improved gives hope that the downward trend through grade school has potential for being changed with the appropriate opportunities. When students are allowed to read at a comfortable reading level stories of their choice and are supported relationally, their attitudes towards the outcome of reading will improve. For bilingual students, evidences of improved English as a result of reading could be perceived as an additional desired outcome. Classroom culture is an important factor in either the improvement or decline of attitudes toward reading.

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